



Used Lead Acid Battery Community Liaison Committee Meeting

22-April-26

7.00pm

Online - MS Teams

Minutes

Topic

Host

Welcome Committee Members and Visitors	Philip Reichert
Apologies John Ellingham (Community member), Leo Billington (Community member) , Dr Lakshman Jayaweera (Pure Chunxing)	Philip Reichert
Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting Approved by Lorraine Bull, Latrobe Valley Sustainability Group.	Philip Reichert

• Site Progress Report Rachel Irvine-Marshall (Pure): There's no major update at this stage. The site remains in care and maintenance. Current work has focused on weed management, fire management, and preparing for the wetter winter months. We are ensuring all stormwater infrastructure is ready for heavier rainfall. • EPA Member Introduction Philip Reichert (Chair): Before handing over to Dr Karl, I'd like Stacey to introduce Jennifer Gibson, who will be involved on the EPA side. Stacey Clarke (VIC EPA): As mentioned before Christmas, I've moved into a new role at EPA. I'm now working two part-time positions and job-sharing with Jennifer Gibson, who is taking on part of my previous responsibilities as Senior Engagement Lead. I'll still work two days a week in this role, and Jennifer will cover the remaining three days. I will remain the main point of contact, but I wanted to introduce Jennifer so everyone is familiar with her. Philip Reichert (Chair): Thank you, Stacy. Welcome, Jennifer. • Update on EPA Submission Dr Karl Baltpurvins (CEO, Pure): Although it may appear that there hasn't been much activity, particularly physically on site, there has been significant work happening in relation to design and approvals. To refresh everyone's memory, mid to late last year Pure Chunxing submitted to EPA what we hoped would be the final round of documentation to satisfy one of the key works approval conditions. Following that submission, the EPA came back with a number of additional questions—approximately 80 in total. The two main requirements were that Pure Chunxing needed to consider the addition of a wastewater treatment plant to act as a capacity buffer and that we needed to appoint an EPA accreditor auditor. The plant itself is a net consumer of water, so while we intend to reuse water, we recognise the benefits of having a backup wastewater treatment plant in place. To address this request, Pure Chunxing engaged a specialised water reuse company, Connexa, to undertake the design work, which was a substantial task. Secondly, we were required to have our responses and design documentation reviewed by an EPA-accredited auditor. Our understanding is that EPA auditors go through a formal accreditation process and are responsible for reviewing environmental matters relating to industry and community impacts, and then providing an independent	Dr Karlis Balpurvins & Rachel Irvine- Marshall (Pure)
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opinion to the EPA on whether the submissions are satisfactory. Pure Chunxing engaged John Nolan to carry out this review. It was a very comprehensive process, covering not only the wastewater treatment design and the 80 outstanding items, but also a full update of the entire design documentation.

The updated and consolidated design document and the report from the EPA-accredited auditor was finalised and submitted to the EPA last week. Pure Chunxing are hopeful that this represents the conclusion of our response phase. I (Dr Karlis Baltpurvins) have been in contact with Wendy Tao, who you met at one of our previous meetings, and Pure Chunxing have advised that the review will be completed in May. Ideally, we are hoping to receive a clear outcome or direction by the end of May.

Given that we are now in late April, this places us just over a month away from that potential milestone. We are hopeful that by the next community meeting, we will be in a position to provide much greater clarity around the construction phase.

That said, there is still considerable work ahead, including finalising design, procurement, and ultimately construction. In many ways, we are still at the early stages of the overall process. However, we do feel that we are close to a significant milestone.

Given the number of iterations we've gone through, this has ultimately been a valuable exercise in consolidating and refining all documentation into a consistent and contemporary standard.

In summary, we have submitted our final documentation to the EPA and are now awaiting their response. At this point we'll be able to provide a clear path forward.

- **Any other questions from the community members for discussion**

Question Sally Fraser (ALIVE Inc): Will the community be informed immediately when a response is received from the EPA, or will updates wait until the next scheduled meeting?

Comment Dr Karl Baltpurvins (CEO, Pure): Sally, it would be more prudent for us to reconvene once we have a clear direction. So perhaps, if the community group is supportive, we could organise the next meeting accordingly—either by nominating a date in advance or waiting until we receive the EPA response so we can provide meaningful feedback.

Comment Rachel Irvine-Marshall (Pure): The next meeting is currently scheduled for 17 June, which is roughly two weeks after the expected EPA response timeframe.

Comment Philip Reichert (Chair): Thank you. I was just thinking, based on that timing: if the EPA response comes through at the end of May, or hypothetically in the first week of June, and allowing about a week to review and digest the information, that only leaves about a week before the scheduled meeting. So perhaps what we do at that point is send an email update to the community advising that the meeting is upcoming and sharing whatever information is available at that time. I would expect the 17 June meeting to remain appropriate unless we receive a decision earlier in May. If that happens, we might consider bringing the meeting forward to early June. Otherwise, we proceed as scheduled. In any case, Rachel and I will work together to ensure the community is informed as quickly as possible. That said, we also need to facilitate a proper discussion with all stakeholders—it can't just be handled via email. There's a balance to strike here. Comment Rachel Irvine-Marshall (Pure): In that situation, we would likely propose an in-person meeting, with an option to dial in for those unable to attend. Comment Philip Reichert (Chair): Yes, I agree. I think a face-to-face meeting would be preferable, as we would likely have more substantial engagement from the community given the significance of the update. Question Lorraine Bull (Latrobe Valley Sustainability Group): Assuming EPA approval is granted, is financing in place to progress the project? Comment Dr Karl Baltpurvins (CEO, Pure): Financing is currently being worked through, but final arrangements cannot be completed until exact capital amounts and EPA conditions are known. A more concrete update will be provided at the next meeting, once approvals are finalised. For context, projects of this nature are typically funded through a combination of debt and equity. This can be quite complex for a startup greenfield operation like this, but we do have strong experience in structuring and delivering similar financing. At this stage, we will need to wait for the final approval conditions before progressing any further, after which we will be in a position to provide a more detailed update. Question Lorraine Bull (Latrobe Valley Sustainability Group): It's been several years that this project's been underway. What's been happening with all the batteries that have been produced and discarded in that time? Do they all get shipped overseas?	
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Comment Dr Karl Baltpurvins (CEO, Pure): That’s a very good question, Lorraine. Most batteries are currently being “broken” at various locations across Australia. To refresh everyone’s memory, this plant operates as a two-stage process. The first stage involves breaking the batteries down into their constituent materials—primarily lead paste and lead grid, along with some other materials. These separated materials are then either processed locally in Australia through at one of several smelters or exported overseas. A significant portion is exported, predominantly to Korea, India, and the Philippines. For those who are interested, there is also a significant shift occurring in battery technologies. In Australia, and globally, there has been a rapid increase in alternative battery chemistries, particularly lithium-based batteries, which are becoming increasingly dominant. As a result, Australia is working to develop the capability to recycle these newer battery types, as they involve very different chemical processes. It’s a complex but important area of development. For now, however, the current system remains a combination of domestic processing and substantial export activity, particularly to Korea, India, and the Philippines. Question Philip Reichert (Chair): Karl, you’ve raised an interesting point, and it makes me want to ask a question—although I’m a bit hesitant. You mentioned lithium, and with developments like the Dural battery project coming online next year—although I don’t recall the exact capacity, I believe it’s around 300 megawatts, supplying approximately 210,000 homes for four hours—it raises the question: Is lithium something that could be considered in the future? For example, while the current focus is on lead, could lithium be a potential area for expansion down the track? Comment Dr Karl Baltpurvins (CEO, Pure): Yes, it’s a good question. we haven’t considered it in great detail at this stage. Currently, the volume of lithium batteries in Australia is still too small to make local recycling economically viable. Over time, perhaps in 10 to 15 years, I would expect there to be sufficient volume in Australia to justify establishing a dedicated recycling facility. Given the ongoing electrification, I believe it will eventually be necessary for Australia to develop sovereign capability in lithium battery recycling, and potentially even manufacturing. However, at this stage, my honest view is that it is still some time away. Another important point regarding lithium batteries is that there are many misconceptions about them. The dominant emerging chemistry is lithium iron phosphate, which is relatively stable. However, embedded lithium batteries in electronic waste are currently causing significant issues in Australia, including a high number of fires. This highlights the need for improved domestic capability to manage these materials. That said, this is outside the scope of the current project and remains more of a future consideration.	
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And just as a general reminder—lithium batteries should never be disposed of in general waste. It’s extremely dangerous. Comment Philip Reichert (Chair): Yes, absolutely. I couldn’t agree more. I’m not a specialist, but I always keep lithium batteries separate and ensure they are disposed of properly—it’s very important. We’ve seen incidents in the past, such as the Samsung battery issues, which even led to restrictions on aeroplanes. These are real risks that people need to be aware of. I appreciate your response, Karl. I understand this is outside the current project scope, which is focused on lead recycling, and that’s where the attention should remain. My question was more of a general observation, given how quickly battery technology is evolving. As you said, lithium is likely still years away for this type of project, and it comes with its own challenges. For now, the focus remains on lead.	
Summary of Actions: EPA Submission Response Update: Send an email update to the community regarding the outcome of the EPA submission as soon as information is available, ahead of the next scheduled meeting. (Rachel Irvine-Marshall, Pure) Next Meeting Logistics: Propose and organise an in-person meeting (with dial-in option) for the community to discuss the EPA outcome if substantial news is received before the next scheduled meeting. Rachel Irvine-Marshall, Pure) Project Financing Update: Provide an update on project financing status once EPA approval and final conditions are received. (Dr Karlis Baltpurvins, Pure)	
Next Meeting Date and Agenda Planning Agenda Items, please send to Rachel prior to the meeting The next meeting for 17 June 2026, with Rachel to confirm and update the calendar.	Philip Reichert